

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A coform nonwoven web having a substantially uniform structure comprising

a plurality of substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments; and

a second absorbent material selected from the group consisting of absorbent fibers, absorbent particles, and a mixture of absorbent fibers and absorbent particles, wherein the absorbent second material is substantially uniformly dispersed within the multicomponent thermoplastic filaments in the z-direction of the coform nonwoven web; and

wherein the multicomponent thermoplastic filaments comprise about 5 to about 30% by weight of the nonwoven web and the absorbent material comprise about 70 to about 95% by weight of the nonwoven web.

2-5. Canceled

6. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven web according to claim 1. wherein the multicomponent polymer comprises a polymer component selected the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene, polybutylene, fluoropolyolefins, high pressure branched low density polyethylenes, linear low density polyethylenes having an alpha-olefin comonomer content more than about 10% by weight, copolymers of ethylene with at least one vinyl monomer, copolymers of ethylene with unsaturated aliphatic carboxylic acids or derivatives thereof, copolymers of any two alpha-olefins having 2-20 carbon atoms wherein the content of each of the two comonomers exceeds 10% by weight of the

copolymer, thermoplastic polyurethanes, A-B and A-B-A' block copolymers where A and A' are thermoplastic end blocks and B is an elastomeric block, polyamides, polyvinyl acetates, saponified polyvinyl acetates, saponified ethylene vinyl acetates, and mixtures thereof; and a second polymer component selected the group consisting of polypropylene homopolymers, polypropylene copolymers containing up to about 10% ethylene or another C₄-C₂₀ alpha-olefin comonomer, high density polyethylenes, linear low density polyethylenes in which the alpha-olefin comonomer content is less than about 10% by weight, polyamides, polyesters, polycarbonates, polytetrafluoroethylenes, and mixtures thereof.

7. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven web according to claim 1 [[2]], wherein the multicomponent filaments are a bicomponent filaments.

8. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven web according to claim 1 [[2]], wherein the multicomponent filaments have a core/sheath or a side-by-side configuration.

9. (Original) The nonwoven web according to claim 8, wherein the multicomponent filaments have an A/B/A side-by-side configuration.

10. (Original) The nonwoven web according to claim 1, having a density in the range of about 0.01 g/cc to about 0.5 g/cc.

11. (Original) The nonwoven web according to claim 1, having a density in the range of about 0.05 g/cc to about 0.2 g/cc.

12. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven web according to claim 1 [[2]], comprising a horizontal wicking distance of at least 70 mm per 30 minute time period.

13. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven web according to claim 1 [[2]], wherein the absorbent material comprises pulp.

14. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven web according to claim 1 [[2]], wherein the absorbent material comprises a superabsorbent fiber or particle.

15. (Original) The nonwoven web according to claim 14, wherein the absorbent material further comprises pulp.

16. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven web according to claim 15, wherein the superabsorbent material is present in an amount less than about 50% by weight, based on the total weight of the absorbent material in the nonwoven web.

17. (Original) The nonwoven web according to claim 16, wherein the superabsorbent material is present in an amount between about 5 and 25% by weight, based on the total weight of the absorbent material in the nonwoven web.

18. (Original) The nonwoven web according to claim 1, further comprising an essentially vertical layering lay-down structure.

19. (Original) The nonwoven web according to claim 1, wherein the substantially continuous multicomponent filament comprises an A/B/A side by side filament in an amount between about 5 and 30% by weight of the absorbent nonwoven web, comprising, as the A polymeric component, a polymer selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, a fluoropolyolefin and polybutylene, and, as the B polymeric component, a polymer selected from the group consisting polyethylene, polyester or nylon; the absorbent material comprises pulp and is present in an amount between 70 and 95% by weight of the absorbent nonwoven web.

20. (Original) An absorbent article comprising the nonwoven web of claim 1.

21-40. (Canceled)

41. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 1, wherein the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments are attenuated by

subjecting the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments to a fluid stream that is perturbed by alternately varying the fluid pressure of the fluid stream on opposite sides of the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments.

42. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 41, wherein the fluid stream is perturbed by using a rotary valve.

43. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 41, wherein the fluid stream is perturbed by a high speed rotary valve.

44. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 1, wherein the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments are attenuated by subjecting the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments to a fluid stream that is perturbed by varying the fluid pressure of the fluid stream on both sides of the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments.

45. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 44, wherein the fluid stream is perturbed by using a rotary valve.

46. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 44, wherein the fluid stream is perturbed by a high speed rotary valve.

47. (Currently Amended) A coform nonwoven web formed by a coform process, the nonwoven web having a top surface, a bottom surface and a middle region between the top surface and the bottom surface, the coform nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments attenuated by subjecting the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments to a fluid stream that is perturbed by varying the fluid pressure of the fluid stream on both sides of the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments, and

a second material absorbent selected from the group consisting of absorbent fibers, absorbent particles, and a mixture of absorbent fibers and absorbent particles, wherein the absorbent second material is substantially uniformly dispersed within the multicomponent thermoplastic filaments of the coform nonwoven web in the z-direction of the coform nonwoven web such that the concentration of the absorbent second material is essentially the same at the top surface, the bottom surface and the middle of the nonwoven web; and

wherein the multicomponent thermoplastic filaments comprise about 5 to about 30% by weight of the nonwoven web and the absorbent material comprise about 70 to about 95% by weight of the nonwoven web.

48. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 47, wherein the fluid stream is perturbed by using a rotary valve.

49. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 47, wherein the fluid stream is perturbed by a high speed rotary valve.

50. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 47, wherein the continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments comprise at least two polymers arranged in substantially constantly positioned distinct zones across the cross-section of the multicomponent filaments and extend continuously along the length of the multicomponent filaments.

51. (Currently Amended) A coform nonwoven web, the nonwoven web having a top surface, a bottom surface and a middle region between the top surface and the bottom surface, the coform nonwoven web comprising

a plurality of substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments that comprise at least two polymers arranged in substantially constantly

positioned distinct zones across the cross-section of the multicomponent filaments and extend continuously along the length of the multicomponent filaments, and

a second absorbent material selected from the group consisting of absorbent fibers, absorbent particles, and a mixture of absorbent fibers and absorbent particles, wherein the second absorbent material is substantially uniformly dispersed within the multicomponent thermoplastic filaments of the coform nonwoven web in the z-direction of the coform nonwoven web such that the concentration of the second absorbent material is essentially the same at the top surface, the bottom surface and the middle of the nonwoven web; and

wherein the multicomponent thermoplastic filaments comprise about 5 to about 30% by weight of the nonwoven web and the absorbent material comprise about 70 to about 95% by weight of the nonwoven web.

52. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 51, wherein the plurality of substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments are attenuated by subjecting the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments to a fluid stream that is perturbed by alternately varying the fluid pressure of the fluid stream on opposite sides of the substantially continuous multicomponent thermoplastic filaments.

53. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 51, wherein the fluid stream is perturbed by using a rotary valve.

54. (Previously presented) The coform nonwoven web of claim 51, wherein the fluid stream is perturbed by a high speed rotary valve.